the repair work in LPG handling areas; and

(c) if so, how more than 30 contract labour were killed inside the Vizag Refinery during LPG handling on 14th September, 1997?

THE MINISTER OF "STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Committee had recommended banning of contract manpower in the LPG bottling plants including inspection of cylinders (empty and filled), evacuation and repair work as it would be difficult to ensure that such manpower is adequately trained and disciplined enough for the various operations in the LPG bottling plants.

(c) Contract labourers who died in HPCL Visakh Refinery fire accident were not involved in LPG handling activities. They were basically engaged for canteen job, black oil tank wagon loading job, security and electrical maintenance job, etc.

Import and marketing of LPG at Haldia

1785. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a joint venture agreement has been signed between PETRONAS and IOC to import and market LPG at Haldia in West Bengal.

(b) if so, the salient features of the joint venture agreement indicating equity participation, capacity of the LPG facility, project cost etc.; and

(c) the likely zero date for commencement of the, .project and the time by which the LPG facility is expected to be operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Oil Corporation has signed joint venture agreement on 12.8.97 with Ms Petroliam Nasional Berhad (Pet-ronas), Malaysia to form a J.V.C. to set up and operate LPG import facility at Haldia and to import and market LPG under the parallel marketing scheme in West Bengal and other adjoining areas. The JVC will offer atleast 50% of the import capacity through Haldia Import facility to IOC for meeting its LPG re-quirements. The JVC will have 50:50% equity participation between IOC and Patronas for setting up a 600 TMTPA capacity LPG import facility at Haldia at an estimated cost of Rs. 223 crores.

(c) The project is estimated to be completed in 24 months from the date of final Government clearance.

Drilling in Drishna-Godavari Basin

1786. SHRI DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC propose to take up drilling in Krishna-Godavari basin;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the expected oil and gas reserves in the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THJE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Drilling operation in Krishna-Godavari Basin is already going on. During the year 1998-99, ONGC plans to drill 26 exploratory wells in this Basin, 20 in onshore and 6 in offshore.

(c) As on 1.4.1997, the balance of recoverable reserves in the Krishna-Godavari Basin is approximately 73.23 MMT of oil and oil equivalent of gas including from Joint Venture operations.